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**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT
AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

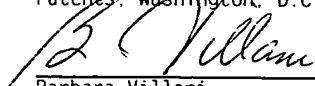
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Barbara Villani

For : IMAGE PROCESSING
APPARATUS, IMAGE
PROCESSING METHOD
AND PROGRAM

Art Unit :

Examiner :

In the event that this Paper is late filed, and the necessary petition for extension of time is not filed concurrently herewith, please consider this as a Petition for the requisite extension of time, and to the extent not tendered by check attached hereto, authorization to charge the extension fee, or any other fee required in connection with this Paper to Account No. 06-1378.

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Asst. Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

S I R :

Amendments to the specification begin on page 2 of this paper.

Remarks begin on page 3 of this paper.